

to which she showed great eagerness to give her milk. These young lived three days.

It may be well to remind the reader that the term of gestation in the goat is five months, and the number of their young generally two, never more than three. —*Révue Médicale*, March, 1838.

MATERIA MEDICA AND GENERAL THERAPEUTICS.

9. *Researches on the Febrifuge Properties of the Chloride of the Oxide of Sodium.* By Dr. GOUZÉE.—The high price of the sulphate of quinine renders it very desirable that some other remedy, more attainable by all classes of society, should be discovered for the effectual treatment of intermittent fevers. In a memoir presented to the Academy of Sciences by Dr. Lalesque, in 1835, the chloride of soda was recommended as possessing medicinal properties as active as those of the sulphate of quinine, and as being fitted to serve as its substitute in all cases in which the quinine is indicated in periodic fevers. Dr. Gouzée gave, at first, but little credit to the value attached to the chloride, until it was further confirmed by the experience of a friend; but, to establish the efficacy of a new febrifuge remedy, various conditions are indispensable. It is not only necessary that the situation generally imparts to intermittent fevers that tenacity which prevents their yielding to all medicines: attention must also be paid to the particular case in which the experiment is made, to the season, to the medical constitution; which circumstances will alone, in certain circumstances, contribute powerfully to recovery. Thus, for example, it has just happened that at Antwerp, where the most favourable circumstances might appear to be combined for experimenting on this chloride, a number of fever patients have become spontaneously convalescent, shortly after their entrance into the hospital; having suddenly passed from a life of activity, and an abundant but not well selected diet, to circumstances of an opposite character. It is also very important to determine the quality of the medicine employed, as well as its exact mode of administration. In these matters too much exactness cannot be observed. The chloride of soda employed by Dr. Gouzée was recently prepared, marking twelve of the areometer, and decolorizing at least eight parts of the sulphate of indigo. The ordinary prescription has been half a drachm of the chloride in four ounces of distilled water. The patients have so taken this dose that the last quantity of it should be swallowed shortly before the occurrence of the paroxysm which it was wished to overcome; and, in order to isolate the patients as much as possible from all opposing influences, a very light diet only was allowed, and confinement either to the bed or chamber was enjoined.

Several cases are recorded, illustrative of the febrifuge action of the chloride of the oxide of sodium, and from them the following inferences appear to be fairly deducible:

1. The chloride of soda actually possesses febrifuge properties.
2. It is far from producing the certain and energetic effects of the sulphate of quinine.
3. It cannot, therefore, replace the sulphate of quinine in every case in which that salt is indicated in intermittent fevers; and it would be imprudent to hazard its employment in pernicious intermittents.
4. It is not irritant.
5. It may be had recourse to in recent intermittent fevers, disposed to yield, in individuals who are easily impressed, in women, in children; and it may, in general, be employed in all cases where there does not exist any danger.
6. The diminution of the intensity of the paroxysms during its use augurs favourably, but does not always announce an approaching cure.
7. It appears to exercise a favourable influence over engorgements of the spleen.
8. It remains a subject for further enquiry whether its dose and mode of administration may not be advantageously modified; if it may not be associated with other substances capable of rendering its action more energetic; if, lastly, in continuing its use, the frequency of relapse may not be diminished.—*B. and F. Med. Rev. from Revue Méd.*, Feb. 1836.

10. *On the use of Stramonium in Neuralgia.* By G. G. SIGMOND, M. D.—In some of those neuralgic affections which I have had occasion to tell you occa-

sionally baffle every expectation of the physician, and in which we are obliged to change from one remedy to another, from the consciousness that we have not as yet precisely ascertained all the points connected with the disease, you will find this herb sometimes answer the end proposed. Dr. Begbie, who, in the year 1825, published in the "Edinburgh Medical and Chirurgical Transactions" the result of some experience, states that he considers the narcotic properties of this plant as decidedly superior, in some cases, to those of other medicines of that class, and he details instances illustrative of its sedative powers. In no case did he perceive any bad effect, with the exception of, in one instance, an unpleasant nervous sensation in the throat. You will find, from one of the periodicals, that Dr. Elliotson has given stramonium at *St. Thomas's Hospital*; in the year 1828 some reports of the cases appeared. He very successfully treated a neuralgic affection of a very severe character, by giving a grain of extract of stramonium an hour before the accession of the paroxysm, which was intermittent; on the third day the excruciating pain was mitigated, the dose was then increased one half, and in ten or twelve days the disease was cured. In another instance he combined mercury with stramonium, and when ptyalism was superinduced the pain ceased, and a cure was effected.—*Lancet*.

11. *Smoking of Stramonium as a remedy for Asthma.* By G. G. SIGMOND, M. D., &c.—The first legitimate introduction of the *datura stramonium*, as a remedy for asthma, and other pulmonary affections, is to be attributed to Dr. Sims, who very strongly recommended smoking the herb. It was in the year 1802, that General Gent, on his return from India, gave to that learned physician and accomplished botanist, a remedy which was used in the east as a specific for relieving the paroxysms of asthma, and told him that it was prepared from the roots of the wild, purple-flowered thorn-apple, the *datura ferox*. The roots, it appeared, were cut into slips, as soon as they were gathered; they were then exposed in the dry air, in the shade, until all moisture had completely evaporated; they were then beaten into fibres, very much resembling in appearance dry hemp. When the remedy was to be tried, these shreds were placed in the bulb of a pipe, either with or without tobacco, according as the individual had been previously accustomed to smoking or not, and then inhaled, after being kindled, in the usual form. This plan and mode of treatment had received the sanction of the highest medical authorities in India, and Dr. Anderson, physician-general at Madras, not only recommended it, but is said to have had recourse to it himself.

Dr. Sims, in one of the periodicals of that day, related a case in which he was induced to administer this remedy. The daughter of an eminent physician laboured under phthisis pulmonalis, combined with asthma, as it appeared to him, from the frequency of the paroxysms of difficulty of breathing, not usual in pure phthisis, at least in so early a stage of the disorder; with a view of alleviating these distressing paroxysms, he recommended a trial of the *datura*, as given to him by General Gent; the relief obtained was far beyond his expectation; and, although the lady gradually sank under the incurable disease, yet she continued to experience throughout its progress, even to the last, the greatest comfort from its use. He then recommended it to Mr. Toulmin, of Hackney, who had for several years suffered frequent paroxysms of asthma; he was much benefited by it, and having exhausted all the stock given him by Dr. Sims, he determined, on the suggestion of the Doctor, to supply its place with the *datura stramonium*, which he found equally serviceable. * * * * Dr. Bree, in a letter published in 1811, states, that from the beginning of the year to the month of April, he had seen eighty-two patients who had smoked stramonium; those who had derived no permanent good effect were fifty-eight out of that number, the remaining twenty-four had been all of them more or less injured, and some of them destroyed, by the practice. Of the fifty-eight, eleven certainly were not in a state to try the remedy, and whether the others derived even temporary relief we are not told. He gives in the list of twenty-four, seven patients with phthisis, who evidently ascribe the natural course of the disease to the bad effects of the herb. He states an instance in which epilepsy occurred to a lady advanced in life, who had never before had any attack of the kind; he likewise adduces instances where the worst symptoms had rapidly supervened, but they were in constitutions highly debili-